# TO THE DEMOCRATIC MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE OF PENNSYLVANIA.

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Fellow-citizens:

The General Assembly of Pennsylvania, in 1819 and in 1847, passed resolutions in favor of preserving the national domain for free white labor, and against the extension of black slavery, because "they were persuaded that to open the fertile regions of the West to a servile race, would tend to increase their numbers beyond all past example, would open a new and steady market for the lawless venders of human flesh, and would render all schemes for obliterating this most foul blot upon the American character useless and unavailing."

You are now called upon to pass, with equal unanimity, resolutions against the repeal or alteration of the Missouri Compromise of 1820, which sprung from the discussions of 1819, and which has been considered sacred by all men of all parties, until the attempt made this winter by *a Northern man with Southern property*, 1. To evade, and 2d, when unmasked to abrogate it.

Upon this question, there can be no doubt of the sentiments of the people of Pennsylvania and of every free State, as the Democratic party have found to their cost in the recent elections of New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.

It would indeed be strange in the people of a State, which abolished slavery in the midst of the revolutionary war, to

stand by and see repealed, directly or indirectly, openly or covertly, the 8th section of the Act of the 6th March, 1820, for the admission of Missouri, which extended the 6th Article of the great Constitutional Ordinance of the 13th July, 1787, to all the territory ceded by France to the United States, under the name of Louisiana, which lies north of 36 degrees 30 minutes of north latitude, and beyond the limits of the State of Missouri.

This Ordinance, recognised as constitutional and binding by the Act of the 7th August, 1789, gave birth to every new State admitted into the Union, which was formed out of the territory included within the original boundaries of the United States, with the exception of Vermont and Kentucky, and has furnished the model for every territorial government that has ever been erected by Congress. From this Ordinance, and its immortal 6th Article, have sprung the five great free States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin, with a free white population nearly, if not quite, equal at this time to the whole free white population of the fifteen slave States, and infinitely more powerful, because not cursed with a servile race of another color, who, in time of war with an European power, or of insurrection, must cripple and destroy the energies of their unfortunate masters, and their still more unfortunate white brethren who own no slaves, but whose labor is injured and degraded by its constant contact with slave labor, and whose time is lost in patrolling, to take care of the human property of their rich and aristocratic fellow-citizens.

The 8th section of the Act of 1820 was passed by overwhelming majorities in both houses of Congress, and was submitted by Mr. Monroe to his Cabinet, composed of Mr. Adams, Mr. Crawford, Judge Thompson, Mr. Wirt, and Mr. Calhoun, and their written opinions were requested upon two questions. The first was, Whether Congress has a constitutional right to prohibit slavery in a territory? The second was, Whether the 8th section of the Missouri Bill was consistent with the Constitution? The answers to both were *unanimously* in the affir-

mative, in favor of the extension of the area of freedom by the only free republic of modern times, and thus settling for ever the constitutionality of a power whose exercise was coeval with the government.

The same course was pursued by President Tyler and Mr. Calhoun, and by President Polk and Mr. Buchanan, in relation to the admission of Texas with the Missouri prohibition, and by Mr. Polk and all his cabinet, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Walker, Mr. Marcy, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Mason, when he signed the Oregon bill, with their complete approval and consent.

It is therefore absurd and ridiculous for a citizen of a free State at this day when small men have succeeded the intellectual giants of the Revolution, and of the war of 1812, to pretend to doubt the power of Congress to pass an Act which is essential to the future prosperity of the boundless regions of the West which have not yet been marred by the foul stain of negro slavery.

We are all aware that two new discoveries have been made by certain patent constitutional statesmen within the last few years, as if the meaning of the Constitution when settled by the uniform practice and assent of the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of the government, was still the subject of invention by ingenious men, who could safely swear that they verily believe that they are the first and original inventors of the improvement in the Constitution, and that they do not know or believe that the same was ever before known or used.

The first, is the new southern theory, that neither Congress nor the territorial government can prevent the owner of slaves from carrying his slaves into any territory of the United States, thereby changing all the territory of the United States, whether Oregon, Washington, Minnesota, New Mexico, Utah, Kansas, or Nebraska into slave territory. The second is the *fence* theory, which gives the power to the first settlers of a territory, whether ten or one hundred, to decide whether slavery shall be admitted and occupy for ever from two hundred thousand to a million of square miles, to the complete exclusion of those free

white men who own no slaves, and whose labor is their capital, and who comprise at least nineteen millions of the 19,559,925 free white inhabitants of the United States.

There is not a word in the Constitution sanctioning either of these pro-inventions: but on the contrary, the power to govern the territories is expressly given to Congress, the creator and master of the territorial governments, which are framed after the Ordinance of 1787, by virtue of which alone, and not by any provision in the Constitution, the delegates from the territories sit and speak, but do not vote in the House of Representatives. A strong mark of the subordinate position held by the territories and their people, whom Congress are training for future free and independent States.

The miserable pretence that the Compromise Act of 1850, which related entirely to territory acquired from Mexico, affected the Missouri Compromise, is too contemptible to require argument. It is refuted by the recollection of every man, woman, and child, who lived at that exciting period.

By the Missouri Compromise, the South got the three slave states of Missouri, Arkansas, and Florida, whilst the North have only Iowa; and now, with worse than Punic faith, it is sought to snatch from the free states what is theirs by a fair, open, and manly bargain, and to slather their fraud under the sole plea of newly-discovered illegality.

No honest man in private life would dare to make such an assertion; and we are yet to learn that there is any true distinction between private and public morality.

The bill overturning this outrage on public faith has passed the Senate; and the owners of slaves, who do not exceed 150,000 souls, are determined, by fair or foul means, to force it through the House. We ought not to have been surprised at its passing the Senate, when we consider the actual and not the theoretical composition of this House of Lords. In the Southern States the owners of slaves are in a small minority: but they are the only capitalists, and all their capital consists in the colored race. They have no other: for their land, for

want of a sufficient white population, is valueless without slave labor.

This small body of capitalists are the masters of the learned professions, the clergyman, the doctor, and the lawyer, and also of the printer, all of whom depend upon their patronage for their success in life. It is the history of the nobles and gentry of England—who at this day control the same classes by their wealth—enacted over again in another country on the western shore of the Atlantic, the titles and land of the one forming the true source of their power, for which the slaveholder substitutes his ownership of the black and mulatto race.

In the nearly equal division of parties in the South, such an organized body tells with tremendous power upon all elections, whether State or national. They control therefore the Governors, the Legislatures, and the very Judiciary of the Southern States, which have, of late years, reversed the decisions of former tribunals, and made them more acceptable to the dominant class. South Carolina is, perhaps, the strongest example of the exercise of this power. Its basis of legislative representation is in reality founded upon slave property, and gives the preponderance to the few—the slave-owners—over the many. The Legislature thus controlled elects the electors of the President and Vice-President, and never intrusts this power to the people. Each Southern Legislature elects its two Senators, who are either slave-owners, or hope to be so.

Instead, therefore, of the senators of a Southern state representing a state, or the people of it, they represent a class of which they are either parts or dependants; and, in truth, they more nearly resemble the Irish and Scotch elective peers, who represent their respective orders in the English House of Lords, than a body of republican legislators. This gives the slaveowner nearly thirty votes in a full Senate; for, on all questions touching their order and their class and their private fortunes, they all, with one or two memorable exceptions, vote for their own interest and the extension of slavery. Out of the thirty-two members from the free States, you may always find some

who come under the description of *a Northern man with Southern property*, and some who hope at some future period to pass the ordeal of their own body, when appointed to some high or low office in the gift of the Executive.

The consequence is now as it always has been, that upon slavery extension, the representatives of the owners of slaves vote together. They know no party lines; Whig and Democrat caucus together, and resolve what propositions shall be offered, what voted down, and when the gag shall be applied to force through a measure abhorrent to the great majority of the American people.

The House consists of two hundred and thirty-four members; ninety of them come from the slave States, seventy of these members represent the free population, and the remaining twenty represent only slaves. They have no white constituents. The free States have one hundred and forty-four representatives, whose constituents are free men, and of these Pennsylvania and New York have sixty-eight, within two of what the whole South would be entitled to if the white basis were adopted.

In the House, therefore, the free States have a clear majority of fifty-four actually, which should be equal to seventy-four in the eyes of those who look to the people, the only true sovereigns in this country.

It lies, therefore, with the members of all parties from the free States to unite in crushing this nefarious proposition, in which, if they acted boldly, promptly, and openly, they would have the assistance of southern men who despise the treason and the traitors.

It is certain, that if this passes by northern votes, as it must do if at all, the actors in it will never be forgotten, and that the news of its passage will only be the signal for agitation for its repeal, which may not stop until all compromises are levelled in the dust.

Having thus briefly stated the present aspect of this question, it may be proper shortly to consider the effect of slavery and

slave labor in States and territories in retarding their prosperity, and excluding free white men and free white labor from their borders.

At the formation of the Constitution, three States of nearly equal territorial extent, and centrally situated, started together. Virginia, out of sixty-five representatives in Congress, had ten, with a white population of 442,115. Pennsylvania had eight members, and a white population of 424,099, whilst New York had but six members, with a white population of 314,142.

In 1850, Virginia has thirteen members, which would be reduced to ten, on the white basis, and a white population of 894,800. New York has thirty-three members, and a white population of 3,048,325, and Pennsylvania twenty-five members, with a white population of 2,258,160.

In the Virginia Convention, of 1788, Pennsylvania was kindly spoken of as a very respectable State. Since 1790, there have been six decennial enumerations of the people. Mark the contrast between the slave and the free State in the following table of the white population of each State at each census.

| | Virginia. | Pennsylvania. |
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| 1800, . . | 514,280 . . | 586,094 |
| 1810, . . | 551,319 . . | 786,804 |
| 1820, . . | 603,087 . . | 1,017,094 |
| 1830, . . | 694,300 . . | 1,309,900 |
| 1840, . . | 740,858 . . | 1,676,115 |
| 1850, . . | 894,800 . . | 2,258,160 |

What is the cause of this lamentable result? Nothing but slavery, which binds free Western Virginia to the car of slave-owning Eastern Virginia, which deprives her of her fair representation in their Legislature, elects owners of slaves to the Senate, and returns the same class to the House.

The trans-Allegheny and Valley Districts in Virginia, comprising 68 counties and a free population of 502,564, with but

63,234 slaves, are made entirely subservient to the policy of Eastern Virginia, comprising 72 counties, a free population of only 392,236, with 412,379 slaves; and all change of this inequality is prohibited by the last constitution until 1865, when four bases are to be submitted to the people, only one of which proposes to give the free white population its proper representation in the popular branch. The fact is, that the Virginia Constitution, like Lord John Russell's Reform Bills, is intended to keep for the aristocracy its power as long as it can be done with safety, by dealing out a small grain of justice at distant intervals.

The truth is, that Western Virginia, as well as Maryland and Delaware, should have been free States long ago, but the aristocracy of slavery have always put their veto upon this act of justice.

In Pennsylvania, we have a city of half a million in the east, and another in the west of 100,000, with what would be large cities in the South scattered over the interior.

Norfolk, the great seaport of Virginia, has but 9,075 white inhabitants; Richmond, its capital, only 15,274; Charleston, the present seat of the Southern Commercial Convention, only 20,012; and Savannah only 8,395.

Are there any other proofs wanting of the ruinous effect of slavery upon the white population of the slave States? If Virginia had been a free State, with her intelligent population, —her men of ability and heroism,—her immense agricultural, mineral, manufacturing, and commercial resources, and her rivers running into her very heart, she might have distanced Pennsylvania in the race of improvement, and perhaps even New York.

She is no longer the mother of men. Her sons desert her for other lands favored by freedom and the wages of freedom; and her station in the Senate House is retained only by old recollections of the days of her intellectual giants, and not by any inherent power of her present generation of statesmen and orators.

In the slave States nearest to us there is a constant refusal of a full representation of the white population. In Delaware, each county has 3 senators and 7 representatives, although New Castle County has nearly one-half of the population of the whole State. In Maryland, each county, though varying from 9,618 souls to 41,589, has one senator; and Baltimore city and county, comprising nearly one-half of the whole population of the State, have only two senators out of 21, and 16 delegates out of a house of 72.

The white freeman, therefore, is not on an equality as to representation in the legislative hall with the slave-owner, who controls his destiny, and who may elect a senator of the United States in the face of a large popular majority in the State.

It is not simply in his character of an elector, that the rights of a white freeman are taken away in a slave State, but he is forced to contribute his time and his labor to take care of the property of his rich neighbor, which in a free State takes care of itself.

In the Southern States there are upwards of three millions of people without the divine institution of marriage,—who have neither wives, husbands, nor children, except as the foal follows the mare. All, from infancy to old age, without distinction of sex, or even of color (for the shades are from black to white), are liable to whipping—cruel and immoderate whipping—in private by their masters, provided it does not affect life or limb. The infant may be separated from its mother and be sold into distant slavery at the will or caprice of the master, or by the iron hand of the law. Three millions of souls, in a Christian land, whether slave or free, are forbidden to learn to read or to write, and *of course forbidden to read the Bible;* whilst free white women are punished with fine and imprisonment for doing what, on the coast of Africa, would be considered the chief end of missionary labor. The vices and degradation of slavery need no enumeration; and their effect on the white race has been graphically portrayed by Colonel Mason, of Virginia. "*Christians,*" says a Southern judge, "*how can we*

*justify it that a slave is not to be permitted to read the Bible?"*

In the South, no large cities call for free white mechanical or other labor, and the interior is virtually closed to all free white labor by the wealthy slave-owner, who employs only his white overseers and his black slaves, whether in the labor of the field, the house, the shop, and even in the manufactory.*

In a Southern State, all free white male (*and in some places female*) inhabitants are liable to do patrol duty, that is, to watch over the slaves of their rich neighbors, and they are called out *at least once* a fortnight, and may correct with stripes, all slaves infringing the slave regulations in the slightest particular.

Does any free white man with his family and their labor think of going to South Carolina, the headquarters of Southern slavery? If this be so, why should such a system be tolerated for a moment in territory now free, and thus exclude the native Pennsylvanian or the hardy emigrant from Europe from settling in the far West. The introduction of slavery is the permanent exclusion of the white freeman and white free labor.

But it is said this entering wedge to repeal, leaves it to the people of the territory—that is, to the few slaveholders who are on its borders prepared to take possession with their slaves and slave labor. One single slave makes it slave territory for ever.

Is the Legislature of Pennsylvania to be thus gulled, and will any Democratic member dare to repeat such a flimsy excuse to his indignant constituents?

In fine, these territories are now free, and they must be kept so, and they must be saved by white freemen and white free labor from that day of reckoning which must come sooner or later to the slave-owners, for it is written by the hand of destiny,

* Slaves as Steamboat Hands.—The steamboat officers on the lower Ohio, Mississippi, and Southern rivers generally, are endeavoring to introduce slaves as deck hands, firemen, &c., on steamboats, in order to counteract the efforts of free laborers to procure higher rates of wages.

that they must either prepare for emancipation or servile insurrection.

We are on the eve of an election by the people, and if the Democratic party is found false to freedom, or hesitating in its action, it must share the fate of its friends in other free States.

Those who believe this proposition for repeal to be a breach of faith, are waiting for legislative action. If it does not come, there only remains a last remedy, a call for a convention on the first of June next.

A DEMOCRAT.